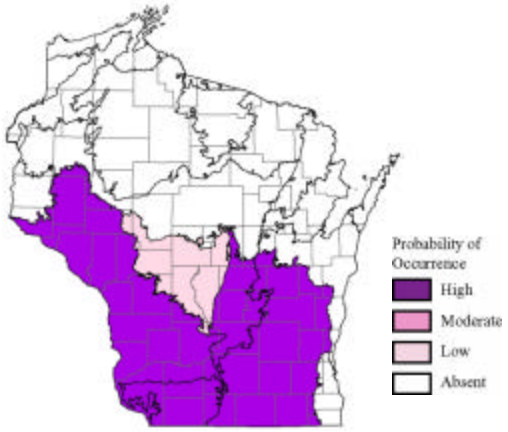
Ornate Box Turtle (*Terrapene ornata*)

Species Assessment Scores*

State rarity:	5
State threats:	5
State population trend:	5
Global abundance:	3
Global distribution:	4
Global threats:	3
Global population trend:	4
Mean Risk Score:	4.1
Area of importance:	2

* Please see the Description of Vertebrate Species Summaries (Section 3.1.1) for definitions of criteria and scores.



Ecological Landscape Associations
Please note that this is not a range map. Shading does not imply that the species is present throughout the Landscape, but represents the probability that the species occurs somewhere in the Landscape.

Landscape-community Combinations of Highest Ecological Priority

Ecological Landscape	Community
Central Sand Hills	Central sands pine-oak forest
Central Sand Hills	Southern dry forest
Southeast Glacial Plains	Dry prairie
Southeast Glacial Plains	Oak opening
Southeast Glacial Plains	Oak woodland
Southeast Glacial Plains	Southern dry forest
Southeast Glacial Plains	Southern dry-mesic forest
Southwest Savanna	Dry prairie
Southwest Savanna	Oak opening
Southwest Savanna	Oak woodland
Western Coulee and Ridges	Cedar glade
Western Coulee and Ridges	Dry prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak opening
Western Coulee and Ridges	Oak woodland
Western Coulee and Ridges	Sand prairie
Western Coulee and Ridges	Southern dry forest
Western Coulee and Ridges	Southern dry-mesic forest

Threats and Issues

- Intentional killing may be an issue for this listed species, though it has only been documented once.
- The conversion of sand prairie to productive agricultural land as a result of irrigation systems is the greatest threat to this species in Wisconsin.
- Pine planting on sand prairies has reduced acreage of suitable habitat.
- Fire suppression has contributed to woody encroachment, reducing critical sand prairie nesting and overwintering habitat.
- Illegal collecting for pets has been documented as recently as the 1990's.

- Spotted knapweed, a non-native invasive plant, is a significant threat to native plant communities on several of the extant sites. The ramifications of this threat are not well understood, but it appears that it could significantly impact this turtle along with many dry/dry-mesic prairies and associated species.
- Motorized recreation may damage sensitive sand prairie habitats used by this species.
- Roads contribute to species decline through vehicle-induced mortality and habitat fragmentation.

Priority Conservation Actions

- Continue to permanently protect, manage and restore habitat on private lands within and adjacent to the St. Lawrence Prairie State Natural Area in Rock County and in other areas where remaining viable populations are known to occur.
- Continue head-starting program with five populations through at least 2012, and increase efforts to locate females at Rocky Run State Natural Area so that head-starting can begin there.
- Additional efforts are needed to control noxious invasive plants like spotted knapweed, sweet clover, and leafy spurge, which degrade habitat for this species.
- Major strides in policy and education efforts are needed to ensure that wildlife habitat is adequately represented and considered in zoning and planning decisions. This is especially important for this species which is very vulnerable to poor highway and development planning which might fragment habitats.
- Continued efforts are needed to educate landowners whose lands support Ornate box turtles.
- Long term monitoring is needed to evaluate population status and track trends of representative populations.
- A thorough scientific assessment of head starting programs is needed, along with research to determine why recruitment is low in this species so that recruitment problems can be addressed and head starting programs may eventually cease.
- Analyses are needed to determine the long term viability of extant populations.
- Continue and expand efforts to improve the efficiency and affordability of land management efforts, including hosting more landowner work parties.